

**STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
BOARD MEETING SESSION--DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY  
JULY 19, 2006**

**ITEM 10**

**SUBJECT**

CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION TO REVISE THE EARLY LIFE STAGE IMPLEMENTATION PROVISION OF THE INLAND SURFACE WATER AMMONIA OBJECTIVES FOR FRESHWATERS

**DISCUSSION**

On April 25, 2002, the Los Angeles Water Board adopted a Basin Plan amendment updating the freshwater ambient objectives for ammonia based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) "1999 Update of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Ammonia." Consistent with USEPA criteria, the April 2002 amendment included a provision to relax the 30-day average ammonia objective at temperatures below 15 degrees Celsius in water bodies where early life stages (ELS) of fish are not present. This relaxation is possible at low ambient water temperatures because adult and juvenile fish, as well as invertebrates, are less sensitive to ammonia toxicity than are ELS fish. However, in water bodies where ELS are present, the 30-day average objective cannot be relaxed at lower temperatures because at temperatures less than 15 degrees Celsius ELS of fish are the most sensitive to chronic ammonia exposure.

The Basin Plan amendment updating the freshwater ambient objectives for ammonia stated that waters with the Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN) beneficial use designation are considered to be "ELS present" waters. The rationale for this approach was that SPWN defines those waters that "support high-quality, aquatic habitats suitable for reproduction and early development of fish." However, in response to public comments at the Los Angeles Water Board meeting on April 25, 2002, the board directed staff to ensure that the SPWN designation would in fact cover all water bodies that support ELS of fish. The Los Angeles Water Board directed staff to convene an advisory committee to assist in this determination and bring the issue back to the board.

In response to the Los Angeles Water Board's direction, from February to November 2003, staff worked with a technical advisory committee consisting of fisheries experts from academia and various public agencies. Staff also consulted with USEPA via phone and written communication in 2003. As a result of these discussions, staff recommended, and the Los Angeles Water Board adopted, to apply "ELS absent" ammonia objectives in major water bodies that do not have fish species that reproduce below 15 degrees Celsius or where physical conditions preclude reproduction and early development in significant numbers even where fish species reproduce below 15 degrees Celsius. These objectives would apply to the following watersheds: Ventura River, Calleguas-Conejo Creek, Malibu Creek, Ballona Creek, Dominguez Channel, Los Angeles River, and San Gabriel River. For all other water bodies, "ELS present" objectives would apply.

The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Water Board) adopted an updated Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan) on June 13, 1994. The Basin Plan was approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) on November 17, 1994 and by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on February 23, 1995.

On December 1, 2005 the Los Angeles Water Board adopted [Resolution No. 2005-014](#) to revise the ELS implementation provision of the inland surface water ammonia objectives for freshwaters, consistent with the Los Angeles Water Board's request to update the April 25, 2002 Basin Plan amendment.

**POLICY ISSUE**

Should the State Water Board approve the amendment to the Basin Plan to revise the ELS implementation provision of the inland surface water ammonia objectives for freshwaters as adopted in Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. 2005-014?

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Los Angeles Water Board and State Water Board staff work associated with or resulting from this action will be addressed with existing and future budgeted resources.

**REGIONAL WATER BOARD IMPACT**

Yes, adoption of this Resolution will amend the Los Angeles Water Board's Basin Plan.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the State Water Board:

1. Approves the amendment to the Los Angeles Water Board Basin Plan to revise the ELS implementation provision of the inland surface water ammonia objectives for freshwaters as adopted in Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. 2005-014.
2. Authorizes the Executive Director to transmit the amendment and administrative record for this action to OAL and to USEPA for approval.

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD  
RESOLUTION NO. 2006-

APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE WATER QUALITY  
CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES REGION TO REVISE THE EARLY LIFE STAGE  
IMPLEMENTATION PROVISION OF THE INLAND SURFACE WATER AMMONIA  
OBJECTIVES FOR FRESHWATERS

WHEREAS:

1. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Los Angeles Water Board) adopted a revised Water Quality Control Plan for the Los Angeles Region (Basin Plan) on June 13, 1994, which was approved by the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) on November 17, 1994 and by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on February 23, 1995.
2. On December 1, 2005, the Los Angeles Water Board adopted Resolution No. 2005-014 (Attachment) amending the Basin Plan to revise the early life stage implementation provision of the inland surface water ammonia objectives for freshwaters.
3. Los Angeles Water Board staff prepared documents and followed procedures satisfying environmental documentation requirements in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and other State laws and regulations.
4. The Los Angeles Water Board found that the additions of this amendment would result in no adverse effect on wildlife, and the amendment would be consistent with the State Antidegradation Policy (State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16) and federal antidegradation requirements.
5. The State Water Board finds that the Basin Plan amendment is in conformance with Water Code section 13240, which specifies that the Los Angeles Water Board may revise its Basin Plan, and section 13242, which requires a program of implementation of water quality objectives.
6. A Basin Plan amendment does not become effective until approved by the State Water Board and until the regulatory provisions are approved by OAL and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The State Water Board:

1. Approves the amendment to the Los Angeles Water Board Basin Plan to revise the early life stage implementation provision of the inland surface water ammonia objectives for freshwaters as adopted in Los Angeles Water Board Resolution No. 2005-014.
2. Authorizes the Executive Director to transmit the amendment and administrative record for this action to OAL and to USEPA for approval.

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned, Clerk to the Board, does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the State Water Board held on July 19, 2006.

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Clerk to the Board